

Lebanon, Pa.,
United Brethren Church

History of the
Controversy between
East Pennsylvania
Conference
and
Trinity U. B. Church

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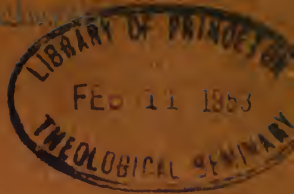


PRESENTED BY

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HISTORY

—OF—

The Controversy

—BETWEEN—

East Pennsylvania Conference

—AND—

Trinity U. B. Church,

LEBANON, PA.,

—WITH—

An Appeal

To the Clergy and Laity on the Rights of the Laity in the
Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

AUTHORIZED AND PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICIAL BOARD OF
TRINITY U. B. CHURCH, LEBANON, PA

INTRODUCTORY.

After long and patient waiting for the Christian spirit to triumph and end our controversy with East Pennsylvania Conference, and continuing for almost two years, and with little hope, at present, that our misguided brethren will abandon their worse than unseemly course; We, the official board of Trinity U. B. Church, Lebanon, Pa., now think it proper and necessary to publish to the church at large the facts connected with the controversy so needlessly and unwisely begun, expose the lawlessness of our oppressors and reply to the more important and deceiving excuses, not reasons, they give out to palliate and justify their unprecedented, inexcusable and destructive procedure with our congregation.

This pamphlet needs and makes no apology for its appearance, but that of sad necessity. It needs but little explanation. It will explain itself to him that reads it. After almost two years of hard dealing with us, of the intensest heart suffering for our erring brethren and for the church we built and have supported in every way for almost thirty years, and after many bitter and untrue attacks upon us, and after two compromises proposed by ourselves, heartily entered into by all, and kept by ourselves and broken by them, we have not written a line of defense or explanation.

Often we felt we could endure the outrage no longer but we now think better counsel prevailed. Many have urged us, from the beginning, to tell the story as we know it, but we have resisted this friendly interest until now. We did not remain silent because we were guilty of a great wrong or had no defense, as the reader will easily see before he finishes reading these pages. We bore all without response because we determined not to be re-

sponsible for the continuance of the trouble and also in the hope that after our clerical brethren had time to consider their great blunder and cool off they would relent and the controversy would speedily come to a peaceful end. Moreover we knew the cause of our Master would suffer less and we would show the Christian spirit more if we "answered not a word." Nor do we intend now to go into the secular papers with our cause or make more than a single reference to anything of the much the presiding elder has published and sent out through the columns of the Conference Herald and the little published by Bishop Hott in the daily papers of our city.

Our first reason for breaking our long and patient silence is that the attitude and conduct of the presiding elder and the conference toward us waxes worse and worse. Their course has gone from disregard of tacit and positive promises to us, from utterly ignoring every courteous, reasonable and fairly expressed request and petition we made to them, and from their arbitrary rule, to high handed lawlessness and relentless oppression that not only menaces the very existence of our congregation but disgraces the whole church and threatens it with anarchical confusion, present inefficiency and future decay. Along with this there are an increasingly large number of valuable, influential and sympathizing friends from many sections in the church, and out of it, who say we have borne the assaults and disregard of our rights long enough, and, with earnest solicitation, urge us to tell our side of the story, call attention to their own various lawless acts, and let the people, acting as a jury, determine where the responsibility for the disgraceful controversy should rest. Another reason for publishing this pamphlet is that we have been refused a hearing through the columns of the Conference Herald and the Telescope.

Dr. Rock wrote to D. D. Lowery, the presiding elder, January 21st, 1895, and said:

"My Brother:—Through the columns of the Conference Herald you have made two attacks upon Trinity and

myself. Will you, in fairness, allow me a reply through the same medium."

To this he made no reply whatever.

On July 7th, 1896, Dr. Rock wrote the editor of the Telescope the following letter:—

LEBANON, PA., July 7, 1896.

Editor Telescope, Dayton, O.

Dear Bro:—It appears that the Lebanon Trinity Church controversy has become known throughout the church and in a way that, to the incorrectly informed, leads them to place all the responsibility for the unfortunate trouble on the congregation and myself. We feel so assured that a true, clear and unimpassioned statement of the facts in the columns of the Telescope, with a clean and manly discussion of the questions involved, would remove censure from us and place it where it belongs, and do so great good for our Zion that on behalf of the congregation and myself I write to kindly ask you for the privilege of such statement and discussion. We are furthermore led to such reasonable and courteous request because the Telescope, in publishing its own opinions and the movements of our oppressors and the counsels and decisions of the board of bishops, relative to the matter, has been the chief medium of information to the whole church concerning the controversy. It is the only existing medium through which the entire church can be informed of the truth and the facts and by which all fair minds will relieve us from more than a fraction of censure for all the unpleasant things that have occurred and for the gross and outrageous wrongs that have been perpetrated. With the hope that you will prove the friend of fair play and of the wronged and oppressed, and with the one desire of securing justice to ourselves and greater justice to our Master's cause, I am

Yours Faithfully,

R. ROCK.

To this letter the editor of the Telescope made the following reply:

DAYTON, O., July 9th, 1896.

Rev. R. Rock, D. D.

Dear Brother:—Replying to yours of the 7th inst., I would say that the columns of the Telescope cannot be thrown open to a discussion of the merits and demerits of the case to which you refer. To do

so would be to inflict great injury upon the whole church, and could result in no good whatever. Of course official statements in regard to the matter, coming from the quarterly and the annual conference, or from the presiding elder or the board of bishops, will be published when accompanied by a request to that effect, but nothing more."

Just what is meant by "official statements" we cannot tell but it will be observed that he shuts out "the merits and demerits of the case." We made the request thinking the Telescope belongs to the laity of the church just as much as to the clerical officials, and with the understanding that when an exposure or attack is made on any person or persons they have the right of defense through the same medium.

But it will appear evident to all that either we must remain under the censure of having no justification for our course, and the non-informed and misinformed must remain ignorant of the facts, and the guilty go free of the censure and condemnation they deserve, or we must publish the facts through the most respectable medium open to us.

In telling the story we will indulge in no coloring nor use any of the arts of rhetoric. Nor will we aim to use the "rubbing in" process on our enemies and oppressors, although they have often made themselves vulnerable. A clear, unimpassioned statement and the unvarnished truth will be severer than we could wish, but this we can not avoid. The best we can do is to state the truth in kind, soft words. While we will not pose as perfect, their mistakes will be set down as well as our own and this to show that there are abundant mitigating circumstances to justify our course. Nor do we publish the facts because of any ill will to our brethren who have so cruelly and unfeelingly wronged us or with any desire to do them harm. We love them, but do not love their conduct, and stand ready any time to meet them and end the controversy with a love feast when they do works meet for repentance, and are willing to respect our tastes, our choices and our rights.

We will first invite the attention of our readers to the
MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

In many controversies, even where there is no authority for the course pursued by either or both parties involved, there are one or more mitigating or palliating circumstances, that is facts which either explain the conduct or lessen or remove the guilt of the offender or do both. Leaving out of the question at this place any discussion as to the loyalty or lawlessness of Trinity church in rejecting Rev. Z. A. Weidler and employing Rev. Dr. Rock we invite the unprejudiced and impartial attention of the church to a number of facts, put down in the order of their occurrence, which explain our course and we believe will be sufficient to justify us and to place the responsibility for all our trouble upon the conference or those who acted for it. We do not say we acted infallibly in all we did, but we ask our brethren who believe in fairness and the practice of good faith among men, and also in the right of the laity to a voice in the selection of a suitable pastor, and the rejection of one disqualified, for any reason, to serve them with efficiency, to determine, from the following facts, whether we were not tempted by an extraordinary provocation.

1. In the latter part of the conference year of 1894, it became known to us and our pastor, Rev. C. J. Kephart, that he would retire, two months later, from the pastorate of our congregation. There was some talk about a suitable preacher to be his successor and he kindly suggested the name of Dr. Rock, as probably an available man. This was the first and only suggestion of the name of Dr. Rock, from any source, and to this we gave but little thought until after hearing him at Mt. Gretna camp-meeting, and still more at the last quarterly conference for that year

2. Not a few times, in our homes, on the street cars and elsewhere, our presiding elder, Rev. D. D. Lowery, kindly, and we thought with sincerity, asked us who we

wanted for our next pastor. To his inquiry we never indicated a name. Then in our last quarterly conference for that year, and held on the evening of September 4th, 1894, and after the regular business was finished, and in accordance with our custom and a very common practice throughout the church, Rev. Lowery asked us whether we desired to take any action as to who should be our next pastor. The reader will observe that the presiding elder brought the matter up himself and virtually invited us to make a selection and shoulder the responsibility. Our reply was that we thought of making no selection. As times were close and we were in debt we would accept an appointment from the conference and very much reduce the salary. Against this idea of reducing the salary the presiding elder and our pastor protested earnestly, with good reasons. Then one of our officials said, "If we must pay the old salary we intend to have good preaching and want some say about who shall do it." No one raised any objection to that and, acting on the earlier suggestion of our pastor, he proceeded to move that we call Dr. Rock. The presiding elder refused to entertain this motion, saying, calls were not legal in our church. This is doubtful according to discipline, page 80, section 3.

Then the question was asked, "What will you entertain?" He replied, "I will entertain a motion requesting the conference to send you Dr. Rock." A motion requesting the conference to send us Dr. Rock was immediately made and carried without a dissenting vote. Besides all this, we call attention to the fact that we did not ignore and treat discourteously, either the presiding elder or the conference, but courteously requested them to send us Dr. Rock. It has been our custom to make our own selection of a pastor and we were never denied our choice before, and would not have been at that time with a presiding elder and bishop of less egotism and more judgment.

3. After adjournment of the quarterly conference and on the way home that night, one of our officials asked

Rev. Lowery if he would notify Dr. Rock of our action. He kindly replied, "You notify him." In that same quarterly conference he said, "You have asked for Dr. Rock and you shall have him," and in a letter to one of our brethren, and which we have, he said, "I do not suppose that there is, in our conference, any man weak-minded enough to want to go where he is not wanted. So that difficulty, I should think, would be settled." But two such men have been found in the conference, men who not only wanted to come but appealed to force to be our pastor.

4. Dr. Rock was then notified of the action of our quarterly conference and the desire of our people, and upon receiving the notice he asked for a transfer from his conference, expecting to place it with East Pennsylvania Conference, and also declined work from his conference. As East Pennsylvania Conference did not convene until a month later, he was idle during that time awaiting appointment here and also lost \$100 salary, that being the amount per month he was receiving at Summit street church, Dayton, O. By the time too, that the East Pennsylvania Conference convened, the fall conferences were all over and he would have been obliged to go out of the church to get pastoral employment.

5. During this month of waiting Dr. Rock wrote to D. D. Lowery concerning the matter. Not dreaming of any trouble, or a misuse of his letter, he kept no copy. After Rev. Lowery garbled portions of it and published them in the Conference Herald, Dr. Rock wrote him, kindly asking for a copy of the letter, and he did not even reply. Dr. Rock authorizes us to challenge him to publish the letter in full in the Conference Herald or in the Telescope, or both. As nearly as Dr. Rock can remember, the substance of the letter was as follows:

DAYTON, O , Sept. 15, (about) 1894.

Rev. D. D. Lowry, Harrisburg, Pa.

Dear Bro:—I have an invitation to become the pastor of Trinity, Lebanon, and

am glad you have given your approval. In lieu of this I have taken a transfer from my conference and if you think the way is clear I will send you my transfer and become one of your number and go to work to build up the kingdom of the Master as represented by your conference. It would be a calamity to myself and family if the appointment should not be made. What shall I do?"

This is not all of the letter but such portion as bears more directly on the matter before us. The whole letter is an open, frank expression to the presiding elder and as absolutely free from any scheming or deceit as can be. We desire the reader to mark the statement, "If you think the way is clear," and the question, "What shall I do?"

In a little more than two weeks from the date of Dr. Rock's letter and on Monday of the week in which East Penna. Conference convened on Wednesday, he received from Rev. Lowery the following postal card:

"My Dear Bro. Rock: Just received your letter this moment. Sorry it was not forwarded to me. It will be "all right" so far as I am concerned. But, you know, my opinion cannot be final. Conference may instruct otherwise. The Miami conference affair last year has encouraged that kind of disposition on the part of some of our brethren. I am anticipating no difficulty, however.

Yours Fraternally,

D. D. LOWERY,

Harrisburg, Pa."

10-1-94.

In the Conference Herald for December, 1894, Rev. Lowery undertakes to explain away the evident meaning of the word "anticipate" as used in his card saying:

"I was particularly concerned about the wording of this sentence, and did not mean to say that I *expect* no difficulty, for I was very uncertain as to the issue of this question at conference, and so I used the word "anticipate" in the sense of "to take up beforehand or before the proper time," to "pre-occupy," "forestall."

Bro. Lowery scarcely has the reputation of having such

superfine taste for words or of being such a linguistic metaphysician as to use a word with such very fine discrimination. He gave as his reason for not writing a letter instead of a card that he had no stamp, and yet he has all that free delivery signifies. But Dr. Rock took the card to be a frank and altogether friendly reply and to mean just what it says, and acted accordingly. Had he dreamed trouble was brewing he would have attended the East Pennsylvania Conference session in person and have placed his transfer with the conference. But thinking, from Bro. Lowery's card, that all would be well, he concluded to commit all to him and save the heavy expense of the trip, since Bro. Lowery "anticipated no difficulty." If he knew trouble was brewing why did he not, with honesty and brotherly frankness, say so to Dr. Rock and suggest to him that he come and look after his own interests. This would have made an honest impression. Instead of this he declares that he used the word "anticipate" in the sense in which it is only seldom used and in a sense differing from what Dr. Rock was likely to understand. If he had been as brave and honest as he is stubborn and bigoted he would have been frank with Dr. Rock. He evidently meant what any man would think he meant after reading the card, although we have a letter from him, written to one of our brethren before this, in which, it plainly appears, that himself and others were planning to defeat Dr. Rock's appointment to Trinity. Although Rev. Lowery said to Dr. Rock that a certain bishop had said the card was against Dr. Rock, that same bishop said to Dr. Rock that he had a right to think everything all right from what was in the card, and not a person to whom the card has been shown, and it has been shown to many places any other interpretation upon it. All say he had a right to think everything all right with the presiding elder and to expect the appointment.

6. Notwithstanding Bishop Hott told us we were under no legal obligations to pay Dr. Rock, we did not believe it, but felt ourselves under both moral and legal

obligations to him for his full salary, since through our giving him notice of our action and requesting him to become our pastor, he was without remunerative employment with which to support his family. And we went so far as to invite Dr. Rock to become our pastor because it had been our custom, from the beginning, to select our pastor, excepting an instance or two, and the conference had always kindly granted us our choice. We secured our former pastor without the assistance of the conference or presiding elder and we never knew any one to make any ado about it.

7. During this same month of waiting and only one week before the convening of East Penna. Conference, and while Bishop Hott was in our city holding East German Conference, two of our officials called on him at Rev. H. S. Gabel's, where he had his home, to have a talk with him concerning our action and to urge the appointment of Dr. Rock. He then knew of nothing in the way and spoke in complimentary terms of Dr. Rock as a preacher but then, and later, in a letter, spoke disparagingly of him as a pastor. When they said, "If you think anything more is necessary to secure the appointment we can send a petition to conference signed by at least five sixths of our congregation," he replied, "It is not necessary. All you need do is to send a certified copy of your quarterly conference action." To the question, "To whom shall we send it?" he replied, "To me." Dr. Rock was put in possession of these kindly dispositions of the bishop and these, with what we have set down before, led him to confide in the authorities and commit all to them.

8. On the floor of that memorable conference where those tacit and positive promises were broken, our lay delegate, duly authorized to do so, warned the conference that if Dr. Rock was not appointed there would be trouble. What has followed is more than a sufficient reply to the question, "Was he right?"

9. In the face of these facts and to say the least, tacit promises of the bishop and presiding elder, they sent us

Rev. Z. A. Weidler, a man that could not, under any circumstances, and especially under the sensitive and peculiar conditions that had been created by their arbitrary procedure, have served us advantageously in any particular. We had heard of failures at Baltimore and Philadelphia and did not know of signal success anywhere, although Bishop Hott, in an effort to persuade us to drop Dr. Rock and accept Rev. Weidler, wrote to A. S. Light, editor of the Courier, and postmaster of this city, saying, "There were elements in the case deeper really than you apprehended, in the minds of the brethren of the conference. You heard the speeches on the conference floor and saw the vote, and of course you will know that with the case as it rested, in the minds of the conference, to have appointed Dr. Rock to Trinity church would have been to create a breach in the conference which I am sure, from what I saw of your spirit, you and your church would not wish to have created. Better to endure something else. It gives me great pain of heart that I could not see my way clear under these circumstances, to comply with your request. Of course I do not think you or your people could, under these conditions, have expected any other course from the committee. My only interest is to serve the cause of the Master and the churches and though you have not asked a word of counsel from myself, I have known the parties in this matter for many years. I venture to say to you that your church is well supplied. Bro. Weidler is an able man, a fine scholar, a tireless student and worker, and a man of unblemished life and devotion to the cause of the Master, and has a good record. He is such a man as you may well be proud of, and he will keep you in good shape and do you good service, and honor the cause we all love. I do not wish to reflect on the one you have thought of, for I have no occasion to do so, but in all candor I must say to you that if you knew all in this matter you would feel that you are fortunate personally and as a church. Now I know what I say, you are better

supplied as you are—*very much better.*” We call especial attention to the mystery he indicates in the “deeper elements in the case,” and to the insinuating and cowardly way in which he reflects upon Dr. Rock, as if something awful might be wrong with his record as a man and as a pastor. Of course everybody who knows the facts will smile at his pettifogging when he speaks so superlatively of Rev. Weidler’s scholarship, ability and success, and they will laugh more at the saying that we would be “*very much better*” served by Rev. Weidler than by Dr. Rock. One word, right here, as to Dr. Rock’s efficiency. We have never been served better in the pulpit and rarely so well in our homes. He is equally strong as a preacher and a pastor. We had heard well of him, but he has far superseded our expectations. We are so delighted with him, that we could have no greater pleasure, than to have him appointed our pastor at once.

During the first half of this year Mr. Rigor, who poses now as our pastor, after he voted, with the conference, at the special session, to end his pastorate, to annul our contract with him, and accepted an appointment to “a new society” which he should organize, but never will, because he can’t, was in the habit of saying that “Weidler should have resigned at once, that the conference should never have sent him,” and gave as a reason that “he has destroyed several churches.” Moreover our former pastor must have thought the conditions here suggested our going abroad for a pastor, or he would not have mentioned the name of Dr. Rock as a man that would probably suit us.

10. Upon our giving Rev. Z. A. Weidler information that we would not receive him, he requested a special session of quarterly conference, to counsel on the situation. The presiding elder called the conference and in it the plea was made to receive him but we told him we were under obligations to Dr. Rock, that the stationing committee had broken faith with us, that we had been dealt with arbitrarily and that therefore, if he even suited us,

we could not and would not receive and support him. Nor did we think ourselves lawless in doing this, for we believed then and believe now that, when our law is properly interpreted, it guarantees to the laity an immediate voice in the selection of a pastor and the right of redress from plainly unwise and arbitrary appointments. If it does not, then all this talk about the freedom of our polity from episcopacy, about the right of appeal being inviolate, and about congregationalism in our polity, is so much twaddle. The difference between congregationalism, as those who have the itinerant system use the term, and an absolute itineracy, is the difference between the calling of a pastor by the congregation and the appointing of one by a constituted authority in which the congregation has no immediate voice at all.

All can see, too, that the appointment of Rev. Weidler was a challenge. Officially, we had given notice that if Dr. Rock was not appointed there would be trouble. They did not believe us and so challenged us to make good our warning.

11. Notwithstanding Rev. Z. A. Weidler refused to resign, we renewed our call to Dr. Rock and employed him for the year, every member of our official board signing the contract. Having in regular quarterly conference, rejected Rev. Weidler, we verily believed that we had a disciplinary right to employ the man we desired to serve us. We knew of nothing in the way but the arbitrary refusal of the presiding elder to appoint Dr. Rock, and that was an obstruction easily overcome. The only thing that cast any doubt on our belief, but did not change our opinion, was the decision of the Board of Bishops making a preacher a pastor and giving him control of a church as soon as appointed to it by the stationing committee and leaving the congregation without any appeal or redress. In lieu of their decision, however, we heartily fell in line with their recommendation to arbitrate the case, but Rev. Weidler refused to consider it.

Some persons have thought that had we postponed the

employment of Dr. Rock a little longer, Rev. Weidler would have resigned. That may be. But in the light of his obstinate persistence in doing the very unseemly thing of wanting to stay where he was not wanted and could not be useful we do not now think so. The employment of Dr. Rock seems to have led to the determination with Revs. Lowery and Weidler that they would fight.

12. About this time Rev. D. D. Lowery announced in our city payers that Bishop Hott would preach in Trinity church the first Sabbath, morning and evening, in November. This he did without consulting us. The bishop, presiding elder and Rev. Weidler came to the city on Saturday and went straight to a hotel. One of our brethren, Major H. P. Moyer, cashier of the Farmer's National Bank, this city, went to them and entreated them not to stay at the hotel but to accept the hospitality of our homes. Bishop Hott said: "No. We are not wanted here and I have the money in my pocket to pay my way." Any one can see that for the good of the church we did not want our bishop, in a city in which there are 1,200 or 1,300 United Brethren, to stay at a hotel while here preaching in our church. Our entreaties failing, we arranged for a meeting on Saturday evening at the home of J. B. Rauch, then President of the Farmers' National Bank, this city, of precious memory and now in heaven. Our entire board and some others met them in this meeting and, after a long and warm conference, in which arbitration was talked of, we adjourned to meet again on the following Monday evening and to open the church and to hear the bishop preach twice the next day. He tried to preach the next morning and made one of his famous failures, although he had a magnificent audience and then said, that "feeling quite nervous and unwell, he would not preach in the evening." They returned to their hotel, ate their dinner, we suppose, and after dinner sent us a proposed plan for arbitration and left, by rail, for Mountville, where he preached that evening, notwithstanding he was "too nervous and unwell" to preach for us.

While he spent Saturday evening in urging upon our consciences obedience to man made law he unnecessarily broke God's Sabbath law in the using of a Sunday train. We will say more of the Saturday night meeting and of his failure to return from Mountville and meet us in official meeting on Monday evening, under the general head of "False and Damaging Reports."

13. Soon after Dr. Rock moved among us we called a congregational meeting for the purpose of submitting to it the action of the official board in employing Dr. Rock. This meeting was very largely attended and unanimously confirmed our action. Rev. Weidler, seeking to enter the church to preach, we forcibly prohibited him from entering for any other purpose than as a worshipper.

14. He then appealed to the courts, rather than to fair arbitration and the law of the church, for possession of the pulpit. Couldn't he have done us a great deal of good and would he not have had a deal of joy(?) if he had gotten it!

15. The case hung in the courts without trial, on its merits, when, early in the following August a compromise was effected. Dr. Rock and J. B. Rauch having persuaded Bishop E. B. Kephart, D. D., to act as arbiter, the case was settled by Dr. Rock withdrawing, Rev. Z. A. Weidler resigning and taking the case out of court. We also agreed to forget what of the past would be unpleasant and unprofitable to remember and be brethren, dwelling together "in the unity of the spirit and in the bonds of peace." More will be said of the terms of this compromise later on.

17. Almost two months later we sent a petition to the conference convened at Penbrook, asking it to appoint Dr. Rock pastor of our congregation. This petition was signed by 190 of our membership, and more would have signed it had we taken more time and it was presented to the stationing committee by Major H. P. Moyer, cashier of the Farmers' National Bank; J. Hunsicker, manager of the Lebanon Manufacturing company; J. H.

Seltzer, President of the Lebanon Stove Works; C. E. Rauch, one of the leading merchants of the city, and E. E. McCurdy, attorney-at-law, the first two being members of the city council, and all of them among the very best citizens of our city. After we cleared away some *debris* that some one, who had small regard for the truth when a lie would suit him better, had placed in the way, and after urging, with many reasons, the appointment of Dr. Rock, and, after promising the stationing committee, composed of Bishop Mills, D. D., Revs. H. B. Dohner and D. D. Lowery, "the best year financially, numerically and spiritually, in the history of Trinity church," the bishop was very much in favor of appointing Dr. Rock, but the other members of the committee opposed it to the last. Besides our promise to the committee, we urged that Dr. Rock not only suited us entirely but that he was, as we thought then and think now, the only man that could rally our people and save the church. And this not because no other could serve us just as well, under different conditions, but because the heart of our people was set upon him and many would not forgive the cruelty of shutting him out of the pastorate of our church, when he, with his family, were on the ground and so thoroughly competent to do us good work. It is worthy of note, too, that Dr. Rock had, up to this time, held the respect and good will of our people, but four or five persons at most, and had not had an unkind word with any of them. At that time he could have rallied all but three or four, and could save all but a very few yet if he were made pastor in the regular way. Not very long ago, and just before the parsonage was sold for debt, Mr. Rigor admitted that Dr. Rock could save everything if he had it to himself.

But the presiding elder gave as his great and manly reason for refusing the appointment "It would be a victory for Rock." And Mr. Dohner opposed the appointment of Dr. Rock "because he was guilty of trespass," although a compromise had been effected, (we might say

affected on their part) in which the unpleasant past was to be forgiven and forgotten, and we were to be "brethren" dwelling together "in the unity of the spirit and in the bonds of peace."

The conference adjourned without making any appointment to Trinity. Having sent us word of their purpose, the stationing committee came here on Monday after conference and held a three hours' meeting with our official board. Here again the entire board urged our reasons for the appointment of Dr. Rock and again we promised "the best year financially, numerically and spiritually in the history of the church," and plead, some of us with tears, for the appointment of Dr. Rock. Bishop Mills heartily favored the appointment but Lowery and Dohner were obstinate to the last, and that too, after J. B. Rauch, perhaps the best man among us, plead with tears, and said, "we have had some good preachers and some good pastors, but Dr. Rock is the best all around pastor we ever had." That day our dear brother took a cold which carried him to his grave inside three weeks and we think that but for the meeting made necessary by the stubbornness of two members of the committee he would be here to-day. Whatever the reader may hear to the contrary, Bro. Rauch was as indignant as any of us with both appointments, was ready to invest much money in defending our rights, and would not, had he lived, assisted Mr. Rigor in fixing things up.

18. The presiding elder soon left the city for Harrisburg and that evening appointed to the pastorate of our church G. W. M. Rigor, a man to whom the conference had given no employment for six preceding years and this for the alleged reason of his inefficiency. We used to pity him and thought, with him, that he was refused an appointment during all those years because of the animosities engendered by the Stoverdale campmeeting fight. We thought the old man should have been given some small and less important charge, but we beg pardon of the conference and acknowledge that we now see how,

on the grounds of inefficiency, they were justified in not giving him charge of any field of labor. The presiding elder is reported as saying on Friday night before appointing him on Monday, "The poorest charge in the conference is too good for Rigor," or words to that effect. Think of saying this of a man and then in three days giving him the best appointment east of Ohio. He said this in answer to a plea that was made to give Mr. Rigor some light work at least.

19. We resolved immediately to refuse him moral or financial support, but seeing our congregation going to pieces and, aware that our people, being so insulted with the refusal to appoint Dr. Rock and with the appointment of Mr. Rigor, that they could not be rallied and the church saved, upon the suggestion of Dr. Rock, we consented to a compromise for which we have all been painfully sorry a thousand times. Dr. Rock made the suggestion in good faith and with the hope that it would secure peace and open the way for doing good. The compromise provided that we should accept and support Mr. Rigor as pastor and Dr. Rock was to be made assistant pastor. It was a humiliating position for Dr. Rock but he saw and we knew that if he moved out of the city our congregation would immediately scatter under such a ministry. Mr. Rigor declared he would stay if he did not get a dollar. During the time we tried to persuade him to resign, and in one of our official meetings, he was asked what Weidler should have done when sent here and rejected. His reply was, "He should have resigned." When told that the conditions were more vexing and sensitive than a year before and asked, "Why don't you resign then?" he replied, "I have never resigned from anything and do not intend to break my record." If he had been more careful about his record in some other things and less careful in this that involved no honesty or veracity, it would have been much to his advantage and ours. Immediately after the compromise he proceeded to encourage rivalry between

the factions, made a disturbing noise here and elsewhere about the exercise of our rights in elections, and continued daily to ignore and violate the articles of the compromise into which he not only entered heartily, but made an unsuccessful effort to have the matter compromised in the same way, substantially, before Dr. Rock took hold of it. Rev. Lowery says he was pressed into it and we suppose Mr. Rigor told him so, but Mr. Rigor heartily agreed to it and then tried hard to wriggle out of signing what he had agreed to when it was reduced to writing. It may be interesting to some to know that Rev. Lowery was pressed into consenting to it, and only because he was determined we should not have Dr. Rock in any official capacity whatever. To add to all Mr. Rigor lent his influence to the calling of a special session of the conference, reporting that we were insubordinate, when so far from being true, he was the only one of our number not keeping the articles of compromise which he signed as well as we. We gave him moral and financial support. The members of the official board that entered into a compromise with him heard him regularly, and with all this, his audiences numbered regularly from 44 to 85 before the special session of the conference and from 19 to 44 since that, while in the season for congregations, Dr. Rock preaches to a full house. And Mr. Rigor went to that conference and voted to depose all our officials from office and turn every member, his friends and all, out of the church without notice much less trial; and this he did when he was paid his salary for 18 days beyond the date of the conference.

Reader, would you receive and support such a man to teach you and your children righteousness? And if our law really gives unbridled authority to some jealous, envious, self-willed, self-interested, egotistic, bigoted, stubborn and unstatesman-like presiding elder to make such appointments, and puts him under no compulsion to assist in dismissing the most consummate inefficiency imaginable, and if it upholds such an appointee in forcing

himself upon a people to whom he is already odious and for whom he can do no good whatever, and leaves them without appeal or redress of any kind but the disgraceful one of starving him out, does it not sadly need radical change and improvement? Is there not something here for the next General Conference to do to harmonize the law with rights and with the American and Christian spirit?

20. Last of all came, on June 12th, 1896, the special session (blunder) of East Penna. Conference, called for the alleged purpose of saving the church from sale and to restore peace to the much disturbed congregation; but it succeeded in committing the greatest blunder and the most daring piece of high-handed lawlessness known in the history of the church. It cost \$31 to bring Bishop Weaver from Dayton and \$35 to bring Bishop Kephart from Fort Scott, Kansas. In all it cost the conference not much short of \$400 and who will pay "the fiddler." Why the dear laity of course, the people that have no voice in the selection of a pastor and who must submit to the rule of clerical lords over God's heritage when they see fit to arbitrarily override their most courteous and reasonable petitions.

But from a political standpoint we might rejoice over the action of the special conference, for it not only shows how very wise and great men can lose their heads and commit great blunders and how little regard some men, who appoint themselves guardians of the law and keepers' of the church's purity, have for the law, when they wish to carry a point, but it also showed the bigoted and persecuting spirit of our oppressors, and brought almost everybody who knows of the action to our side.

This is all we will write of the special conference under the general subject of mitigating circumstances since we wish to call it up again under

THINGS UNLAWFUL.

There has been so much said by members of the conference and a few others about the disobedience of Dr. Rock and ourselves "to the order and discipline of the church" that we think something should be said here to show who the great law breakers are. If we did anything unlawful, they more. And on their side, not only did the members of the conference transgress, but, sad to write it, bishops and ex-bishops were among the transgressors. If we have done things not commendable, we have some royal company.

First of all, the conference used \$495 of Church extension money, which the people gave to build churches, to pay Rev. Z. A. Weidler, their lawyers and court costs. Rev. Weidler receiving \$100 of it, and the balance was used to pay their lawyer and their court costs—money not given for any such purpose.

Secondly, certain of them drew \$300 out of the Missionary treasury and gave it to Rev. Weidler, and this without the conference taking action upon it before or since and when Trinity was not a mission nor was Rev. Weidler a missionary. That was a perversion and misuse of sacred funds given by the people for a special purpose and could not be used legally, for any other purpose. And yet after receiving these \$400, illegitimately bestowed, and some other money and donations given by the people here, Rev. Weidler stood upon the conference floor last fall and said that during the year his children had gone to bed hungry and crying for food and at times they did not have shoes fit to go to school. At the same time he occupied a house, the rent of which was \$15 per month, and seemed to have money to go to Harrisburg and elsewhere every now and then.

Thirdly, during all last year, excepting the special session to which reference has been made, the presiding elder refused to recognize our quarterly conference and held a bogus quarterly conference, each quarter, in the

home of Rev. Z. A. Weidler and within the bounds of the East German Conference, and with not more than two of our officials present at any meeting. This he did although we were not disorganized, nor could we be by his *ipsi dixit*. Nor did we even think of denying him the privilege of holding the quarterly conference in our church. In that "rump" quarterly conference they elected a third member of the committee to try Dr. Rock for trespass, although Dr. Rock's committeeman was doing his best to secure a satisfactory third man, and when he failed our quarterly conference alone had authority to elect one. They elected Rev. J. Dickson, D. D., who heartily consented to act upon such an election and met, at Harrisburg, with the presiding elder and other members of the committee and with Revs. Meredith and Ludwig, the prosecutors in the case, and proceeded to try Dr. Rock with a committee of two, when the discipline requires three, without Dr. Rock or his counsel being present, and without any witnesses for the defense, and without hearing anything on his behalf. The farcical trial ended, star chamber fashion, they rendered the predetermined verdict of guilty and later Dickson and Lyter, the two members of the committee, suspended him. It reminds us of some of the farcical trials of the days of the Inquisition and of a recent trial and execution of a Cuban patriot by the Spaniards.

Does any one ask, why Dr. Rock did not attend the farcical trial at Harrisburg? He knew a third man had not been properly elected, that the trial could not legally proceed, as has been decided by the bishops, and he would not recognize the illegal court. He was always ready for trial and even wished, with us, for a chance to be heard before a legal and unbiased court. Neither Dr. Rock nor ourselves are worried about the sham, for it is destined to hurt those who did the unlawful thing, more than it will hurt him. We only want the people to see that neither their knowledge of nor their respect for the law is so great as they pretend.

And thanks to the Board of Bishops, who by decision No. 15 declared Lowery's quarterly conference, Dickson as a committeeman, and Dr. Rock's trial and suspension, all bogus.

And now Dickson and the rest, who were disobedient "to the order and discipline of the church," should make their confession and also have somebody prosecute and suspend them. How would they like charges preferred against them, and to be tried and suspended by an unlawful committeeman? We await their confession and so do those who know the facts. They are just as guilty of "disobedience to the order and discipline of the church" as Dr. Rock was. Not only in one thing, but some of them in several, as this chapter will show.

We want all to notice that a man, a former bishop, who has taken so much pains to help the conference make war on us, has not been innocent himself.

Again, in October, 1894, the Conference laid the penalty of no employment for a year upon two preachers whose characters they had passed a day or two before. And this they did while Bishop Hott was presiding, and he permitted it without protest. Again, that same conference appropriated \$300 to Boehm church, Reading, a very prominent mission, and a regularly registered church, and at the suggestion of the presiding elder, have not paid it to this day. Our presiding elder also refused to appoint that church any pastor, because it wanted one of these men the Conference resolved not to employ. Having no pastor they afterward employed the man they wanted, and, for this reason, the \$300 were withheld. They gave exactly that amount of missionary money to Rev. Weidler that year. It is still due the congregation, and, of course, they will get it. They have recourse to the civil law to compel these lawbreakers to perform their legal and moral duties and keep their promises.

In the bogus quarterly conference, to which reference has been made, the presiding elder and his supporters elected a lay delegate to the annual conference and the

conference admitted him to a seat in the body at both the regular and special sessions, and this last they did after the Board of Bishops had decided that the annual conference is alone competent to deal with an insubordinate congregation.

Last and most presumptuous and lawless of all, if that is possible, a majority asked the bishop to call a special session of conference on June 12, 1896. It was set going that we intended to sell the church, and the conference was called to save the church from sale. False as the report was, whoever was the father of the lie, the conference convened and Bishop Kephart presided, assisted by Bishop Weaver. Bishop Hott was also present. Without giving us any notice or warning of their intended action and after, in conference assembled, making the complaint of insubordination and inefficiency against us, they proceeded, against several dissenting votes, to adopt the following resolutions :

First—That in order to exercise a proper and legitimate control and jurisdiction over the property of the aforesaid Trinity United Brethren church, so as to preserve and maintain it as a place of worship for all who are in harmony and in full sympathy with the doctrines and discipline of the church of the United Brethren in Christ, and choose to unite themselves in membership under these conditions with the said Trinity church, and for inefficiency, the trustees, leaders, stewards, Sunday-school superintendent, president of the Y. P. S. C. E. and all other officers whatsoever are hereby deposed from office, and the arrangement entered into between the official members and Rev. R. Rock is hereby disannulled and set aside, and the said Trinity church is hereby declared disorganized and the church vacant.

Second—That a board of trustees be elected by this conference, as per discipline, page 103, chapter 11, paragraph 10, relative to abandoned church houses; and that the said board of trustees, to be appointed by this conference, take immediate possession of the said Trinity

church property, and make such provision as may be absolutely necessary for its absolute security against loss to the conference and the church of the United Brethren in Christ, and that said board of trustees continue in office until a regularly constituted quarterly conference of said church may elect a board of trustees of its own.

Third—That the said Trinity church be constituted a charge and be supplied, as per discipline, with a pastor, whose duty it shall be to proceed at once to organize a society with such members of the church of the United Brethren in Christ as are known to be in strict accord with the doctrines and government of said church ; and also that provision be made by this conference for the support, if necessary, of said pastor.

It should be said here that we have very good reasons to believe that many voted for these resolutions and the preamble to them in violation of their own convictions and better judgment, because they feared punishment at conference time, from the leaders in this persecution against us.

With no specific charges against any one in particular they proceeded to put an end to the pastorates of both Dr. Rock and Mr. Rigor, to annul our contract with both, to depose all members of our quarterly conference, to disorganize the society, turn every member out of church, declare the house abandoned and vacant, to elect a new board of trustees, constituted Trinity a charge, and to provide for the appointment of some new pastor to organize "a new society" in the old and vacant(?) church and *by a legislative act*, authorized him to receive into this "new society" such United Brethren as are known to be in strict accord with the doctrines and government of the United Brethren church. Think of receiving into the United Brethren church those who are already United Brethren !

Rev. D. D. Lowery, the presiding elder, immediately appointed Mr. Rigor pastor of the "new society," he accepted the appointment and now comes here and imposes

himself upon us as *our* pastor. This he does, although Rev. Lowery said he did not suppose there was a man in the conference weak-minded enough to want to go where he is not wanted.

Some who took part in the infamy are now saying, we were not turned out of church, and this because they would shake off the odium of the monstrous thing. But it is apparent that this extraordinary action was taken to prevent the members of the church, should they not dismiss all, from reelecting the old officers to fill the various offices of the church. In the discussion of the resolutions on the floor of the special conference the impression was made upon the conference and others, by Bishop Kephart, that the pastor of the "new society" could exercise discretionary judgment in receiving members into it who are known to be "loyal to the conference." Mark you, "loyal to the conference," as if the conference were greater than the church, instead of being a small fraction of it. Then think of giving G. W. M. Rigor authority to determine whether we were fit to join the Untied Brethren church! And although the Court of our county restrained C. B. Rettew, Rev. H. B. Dohner and Rev. Daugherty, their new board of trustees for Trinity, who came here and sat about in our church from Friday until Monday, and by unlawful entrance and use of our church, menaced the peace and good order of our people, from carrying out their instructions and ordered matters to remain in the same state as they were before the special session, yet Rev. Rigor refused one of our most excellent young men, of noted piety and scholarship, a certificate of membership, that he might take it with him when he goes to college, because he had not joined this "new society." This young man has been for a number of years and is now a member of high standing in the Trinity U. B. church and has never taken an active part in this contest. This is the way these resolutions were to work. Now if that is not high-handed lawlessness and ecclesiastical lynch law, we

should like some reader of this pamphlet to write and tell us what it is.

The saddest of all, for our dear Zion and the cause of Jesus, is that three bishops were present and encouraged this lawlessness. Bishop Kephart presided and indulged it as legal. Bishop Weaver said it could be done on the ground of inefficiency, and Hott said what is not true and what he had no evidence for saying, that, "the first time I was there (November, 1894,) I saw plainly that these men were planning to sell the church and get control of it." If we cared as much for ourselves and as little for the cause of Christ as he seems to care, we would add to this controversy by prosecuting him in the church for falsehood and slander, and bring an action for damages against him in the civil courts. And we would also prosecute several men for egregious acts of disobedience "to the order and discipline of the church," and the immoralities of falsehood and slander. We have also excellent grounds upon which to base civil actions and recover heavy damages from conference for its high-handed slander and interference with our rights. If this thing is not soon stopped we shall be obliged to secure redress in the civil courts where cases are tried on the law and evidence and not on prejudice, bigotry and hearsay. With so much light on their lawlessness, we appeal to the church and ask, is their course with us consistent and christian? Had they not better say, "We will concede your rights and henceforth behave ourselves better and be brethren?"

Here will be a proper place to speak of the insincerity of the friendship Lowery, *et al*, pretend for Mr. Rigor. For six years they held him at arms length, had no cordial fellowship with him, gave him no employment and, he said, all because he did not agree with them touching Stoverdale campmeeting matters. And now they pretend to love each other! It is the friendship of Herod and Agrippa when they combined to crucify our Lord. We hold a letter, written from the last annual session of East

Pennsylvania Conference, to a member of Trinity church, in which Mr. Rigor gives to the actions of the conference toward himself and us, the euphonious appellation of "hell deviltry." He says, "Such bungling in an annual conference I never saw, much less heard of." He characterized it as "the storm of Ring-rule" and as "hell deviltry." " And now they are friends and they send him here to serve us. They would not be friends now if they could not use him to serve their unholy purposes, for we have no idea they are any more religious than they were a year ago.

This will also be a logical and proper place to speak of the inconsistency and insincerity of the Conference convened to save (?) Trinity church. At the same time they were planning to save (?) a church which is in no peril but from their own intolerance and arbitrary rule, Pleasant Hill church, of this city, was under the sheriff's hammer, and Royalton church was already sold and to-day awaits redemption, while last fall, Boehm church, Reading, which they supplied with a pastor for three preceding years, and one of the best new churches in the east, and one of the very best locations to be found in any city for building up a strong congregation, they refused to mother any longer, and turned it over to the East German Conference, and all because our great presiding elder could not just exactly have his own way with the plucky little congregation that had furnished the money and had done the work. It is growing and will live to be, ere long, a bright star in the crown of the East German Conference. Why were not the officers and members of Pleasant Hill and Royalton churches expelled and turned out for inefficiency by this same conference? The answer is, they had no quarrel with them. Is it not about time that they stop their chatter and accusations about lawlessness in others and look to their own doings? Are they not a little deeper in the mud than we are in the mire? Is it not about time for the pot to cease its charge of blackness against the kettle? It should be re-

membered too that they cannot apologize for their lawlessness by saying, "We provoked them." They have been, as all can see, lawless in several things entirely distinct from the Trinity controversy.

FALSE AND DAMAGING REPORTS.

In order to gain and hold favor with the ministers and people throughout the Conference and elsewhere, certain men have manufactured and circulated several accusations against us. A few of these we wish to mention, and to them append our positive denial.

First among these they say that if A. S. Light, our delegate to the conference in 1894, had not made such a caustic speech on the conference floor, Dr. Rock would have been appointed. In reply to this and in addition to many commendations from others, Mr. Light has a letter from Bishop Hott, and written a short time after the conference, in which he commends Mr. Light's remarks on the conference floor in the following language: "I ought say to you in all candor that your address or speeches before the conference were, by myself, and by all who I heard speak of them—and there were not a few of them,—regarded as able and manly and pervaded by a noble and kindly spirit. For yourself and your church you made many friends. I am not capable of flattery; this is the plain truth." This is certainly a sufficient reply to that puny excuse for not appointing Dr. Rock.

Besides this Rev. Weidler expected, before Conference convened, that he would be sent to Trinity. He must have had assurances, and Rev. C. J. Kephart, also shortly before Conference, when Dr. Rock's appointment was talked of, said, "There is another wind blowing."

There has also been a good deal of chatter about the trouble, this year, never happening if it had not been for A. S. Light and E. E. McCurdy. Our reply to this is that the presiding elder not only showed perfect ab-

absence of statesmanship and the christian spirit, in the appointment of Mr. Rigor, but we were all astonished and insulted. And the very few who gather about him and pretend to be pleased with him would have been the first to have criticised the appointment in a time of peace in the church. The insulting appointment and the assertiveness, dictum and officiousness of Mr. Rigor and his gossiping and encouragement of rivalries both before and after the compromise, with his leanness and slang in the pulpit, and his impracticable bungling, led some of our brethren, who are more capable of abhorring that which is evil and of holy and fervid indignation against a great outrage, to use warm and strong words to express their feelings and rebuke the outrage and the daring and offensive officiousness. And the men who have so much to say about it would not bear it any better than we do, most likely not so well, and they can and have used warmer, and senseless, words in denouncing things not nearly or necessarily so menacing or offensive.

In addition to this, three of their number have recently indicated that Dr Rock was sent over here to destroy "Shueyism" in the East. Not long ago Rev. C. J. Kephart, D. D., said to Brother J. H. Hunsieker that "Rock was sent over here to destroy Shueyism in the East, but Shueyism is stronger in the church than ever before." Rev. Grant Shaffer also said to Brother Boaz Light, "this is not a fight between the Conference and Trinity only, but between Shueyism and Anti-Shueyism." And the presiding elder lately said to one of our preachers, "If Rock had not been sent over here to destroy Shueyism in the east, he would have been appointed by the Conference." This is already a jargon of voices. Probably this is one of Bishop Hott's "deeper elements in the case."

At the first we heard it suggested that Bro. W. J. Shuey, our publishing agent at Dayton, Ohio, had something to do with our disappointment, but we did not see how, and

so thought no more about it. If what these brethren say is true, it has that appearance. We knew that Bro. Shuey did not feel so well toward Dr. Rock, but we could not and cannot see why he, or any other, should join in the destruction of one of the strongest U. B. churches in the East to gratify the savage joy of revenge on Dr. Rock. We cannot, we do not, think a man in his position, and as one of the chief officers of the church, who must, for business reasons, avoid offending any one, and keep friendship with all our people, is, in the least responsible for our trouble, and that he would demand that one of the best congregations in the church must be sacrificed to save "Shueyism."

Is this a political trick conjured up to win Bro. Shuey's sympathy and support for themselves in their extraordinary and unpardonable course? Is this an acknowledgement that they are losing support in the East and must go West for help? We know they need sympathy and will need more before this is over. If Dr. Rock was sent here to destroy "Shueyism" in the east, he never told us so. But he authorizes us to say that he never knew that he was sent by any one, or that he was on such an errand. Besides this, and so far from being sent on such an errand, we heard him defend Bro. Shuey against any part in it early in the controversy. None of us ever heard or thought Dr. Rock on such a mission. Dr. Rock was not sent here but came at our request so unexpected to him. We feel assured that he did not come on the small errand of fighting "Shueyism" but to build up the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and, the longer he is among us, the more do we believe he could do finely, with a fair chance. But if these brethren correctly represent this matter, we appeal to the ministers and laity whether we are to be persecuted to death to preserve "Shueyism" or any other personal "ism". Moreover Bro. Shuey said himself, last fall, on hearing that Mr. Rigor was sent here, that "the conference should have appointed Dr. Rock to Trinity". He knew,

as all know, that the conference has carried this matter too far. No, this is more like a contest carried on to save Loweryism, Hottism, Kephartism, (C. J.) and Dohnerism in the East Pennsylvania Conference, and this one of the most egotistic, bigoted, shortsighted, self-willed, persistent, undiplomatic, and pusillanimous "isms" ever hatched.

It has been put out that we were planning to sell the church and go to the Presbyterians. We were not then, nor are we now, planning to sell the church, nor have we any notion to go to the Presbyterians, good place as that would be to go to. "We are brethren," and better ones than our unbrotherly and tyrannical oppressors. We were in the church before some of the "bosses" that persecute us and we intend to stay. We do not like everything but do not intend to accept Bishop Weaver's advice and "go out." In 1856 Abraham Lincoln said, before the Illinois convention where the Republican party was organized, "We will not go out of the Union and you shall not". So we will not go out of the church. We will do just what Bishop Weaver wisely did when things did not suit him ; we will stay and make things better. This is our privilege and duty so long as improvement is possible. We will stay and labor for equality of rights and against arbitrary rule an unchristian management of christian affairs. We will contend for our rights until the law is so interpreted or made as to secure them and our church and polity are more nearly perfect.

Again they say, we planned to sell the parsonage. Bishop Kephart said, in the special session of conference, that we placed the mortgages on the parsonage and church in order to sell them, and Bishop Hott said that "he saw plainly, the first time he was here, that we were planning to sell the church and get control of it." He saw no such thing, for no such thing was dreamed of, much less planned for. Preachers should tell the truth and bishops should guess at

nothing. Guessing is not evidence in the courts. The mortgage was placed upon the parsonage more than twenty years ago, and half of the principal was paid seven or eight years ago, and the interest was paid, when due, ever since. The man who lent the money on this mortgage has been dead more than nine years. We did not plan to sell the parsonage. The interest and mortgage were due, and the mortgage was foreclosed because we did not pay the interest when due. We did not pay because we do not intend to foot the bills and permit the presiding elder and his henchmen to lord it over us and do all the commanding. We do not believe in taxation without representation. When our rights are respected we will pay as heretofore, and we are not ashamed to have the whole church examine our annual reports to the conference for the twenty-five years preceding this controversy. The mortgage on the church house was placed to cover a debt mainly incurred during the pastorate of Rev C. J. Kephart. Said mortgage was placed by the approval and aid of Revs. Lowery and Rigor, as the records of our court show.

Another thing that they have freely circulated to justify their conduct at the last conference, the appointment of Mr. Rigor, and to injure us with the people, is, that we agreed in the compromise at Mt. Gretna, early in August, 1895, not to ask again for Dr. Rock for pastor, and to accept an appointment from the conference. On page 12 of the last conference minutes, and in the report of Rev D. D. Lowery, he says: "I am sorry, brethren, to tell you that I have been grievously disappointed. These men of Lebanon Trinity were here yesterday to express it as their purpose not to abide by the terms of settlement commonly understood and accepted by us." Each and all of us who were at that meeting, and Dr. Rock besides, are ready to make affirmation before a justice, that this is not only not true, by whomsoever reported, but that the thing was not mentioned in the meeting in which the compromise was effected. At the suggestion of

one, not of our number, who was much interested in bringing about a compromise, Dr. Rock wrote the following paper which was before the meeting for compromise and, although not formally adopted, formed the basis and included all the terms of the compromise :—

Having a Christian desire to bring to a peaceful and happy end the very unfortunate and unpleasant controversy in Trinity United Brethren church, Lebanon, Pa.

“We, the undersigned officials of the said church, do for ourselves and the congregation which we represent, suggest that, according to the advice of Bishop E. B. Kephart, and for the saving of the church and the glory of God, the case be withdrawn from the courts and that the entire matter be adjusted by the withdrawal of Rev. Dr. Rock from the pastorate of said church, and also that of Rev. Z. A. Weidler from the contest for the pulpit, and, forgetting what of the past is unpleasant and unprofitable to remember, be henceforth brethren, dwelling together “in the unity of Spirit and in the bonds of peace.”

A. S. LIGHT,
JNO. B. RAUCH,
JOHN HUNSICKER,
H. P. MOYER,
J. H. SELTZER,
U. D. SELTZER,
C. E. RAUCH.

The only change that was made in the paper was this. It was agreed that it should be said that Rev. Z. A. Weidler “resigned” instead of “withdrew.” At Bishop Kephart’s suggestion the paper was not formally adopted, he preferring that the terms of the compromise should be oral and all agreed that nothing should be published but the fact that a settlement had been effected. We readily acceded to this suggestion of the bishop never dreaming that the terms of compromise would ever be misrepresented.

After this plan was agreed upon Dr. Rock and Rev. Weidler were called in, and these very things were named

to them as a plan of compromise and each was asked if he would agree to it. Both agreeing, the compromise was effected and we thought the past gone and everything lovely. We did not in that compromise, nor do we now, intend to give up any rights we hold assacred, and under our laws and customs, belong to the laity of the United Brethren church.

When we bore our largely signed petition to conference last fall and presented it to the stationing committee, Bishop Mills asked us if we had not agreed not to ask again for Dr. Rock. We told him we never talked of such a thing. He asked Lowery, in our presence, whether we had agreed to such a thing, and he said not in the compromise, but that two of our brethren, the next day, had said they would never ask for Dr. Rock again. If they had said it, it was not official, but each of them told Bishop Mills, in Lowery's presence, and in the presence of the rest of us, that they had said no such thing to him.

Bishop Hott said in the special conference that he plead with us "again and again" to arbitrate. He did not plead with us "again and again." The proposition was made to arbitrate and we agreed on Saturday evening to meet him the following Monday evening in the church and talk arbitration. But on Sabbath he sent us a note from his hotel, signed by himself and Lowery, naming a plan of arbitration. Then he took a train, Sunday afternoon, and left the city, and has not returned to this day, and of course did not meet with us on Monday evening to agree on a plan of arbitration. We followed him with two telegrams, but of no avail. The following is their proposition and plan of arbitration, made only after they came and examined the deed at the Court House, and after consulting their lawyer. They came armed for war, and, forgetting the Prince of Peace whom they pretend to serve, they have been waging a relentless war upon us ever since. The following is their proposed plan of arbitration :

1 "The arbitrators to be chosen from Bishops, ex-Bishops, Presiding Elders and ex-Presiding Elders within convenient distance. 2, The trustees of Trinity church to select one, we to select a second and the two, the third. 3, That the testimony be submitted in writing or as arbitrators may agree. 4, That we agree to abide by their decision according to our disciplinary regulations for arbitrations."

It will be noticed that, in harmony with their practice of dictating everything and allowing us no voice at all, they say, the arbitrators must be bishops, ex-bishops, presiding elders, and ex-presiding elders of convenient distance. This was packing the committee and evidently intended to secure the verdict before the hearing, according to their favorite star chamber fashion.

We regarded this a controversy between the clergy and the laity and would have readily submitted to arbitration had they given us a chance to choose a layman or any other and wherever we saw fit. It must have been the unfairness of their plan that made them run away and refuse to meet us in official meeting on that Monday evening. Does this show that they came with the spirit of men bent on christian arbitration? when the first thing they did was to go to the court house, examine the deed, then consult a lawyer, before seeing one of us, and afterward refused the hospitality of our homes because they had plenty of money to pay their way. We do not know whether the church extension funds had then been drawn upon or not. Bishop Hott says he plead with us "again and again" to arbitrate. Oh yes, he cared so little for Rev. Weidler and was so determined not to permit Dr. Rock to be our pastor, that he wanted to settle it by giving us another man, and said he had a letter in his pocket from a man who would take Trinity, and this was, presumably, his son-in-law, preaching then and now for the Presbyterians. No, he is not the kind of man from whom we would buy a "cat in the bag." In that same Saturday night meeting he asked about 20 of

us, "What will you do if we send Weidler here to worry you this whole year?" Whether or not Hott had anything to do with sending him, Rev. Weidler moved here, did not "worry" us very badly and did not preach once in our church

Soon after Bishop Hott's failure to fulfill his promise and return and meet us in official meeting, to consider and agree upon some plan of arbitration, we sent two of our brethren, Major H. P. Moyer and U. D. Seltzer, to Harrisburg, to beg Bishop Kephart to come on the ground and get the contending parties together and secure an adjustment of the trouble. He declined, "because it was on Bishop Hott's district." This, with what follows, will show how anxious and willing we were to have it adjusted in any Christian way, And it could have been settled, easily, if any bishop had come here in the fatherly, shepherdly and unpartisan spirit of a true bishop and gone heartily and kindly and pleasantly about the work. No man could settle it, then or now, coming with the autocratic, bigoted or hierarchal spirit. This can be settled as the itinerant plan must be administered to stand and be in favor with our people, not arbitrarily, but with Christian kindness and regard for the tastes, wishes and rights of preachers and people.

Then in May, 1895, when the Board of Bishops recommended arbitration without geographical or personal limitation in the choice of the arbiters, at the suggestion of Dr. Rock, we immediately met and agreed to act upon their recommendation, which we did by passing the following resolution and forwarded it to the secretary of the Board of Bishops :—

"Resolved, That we cheerfully and obediently accept and heartily approve the advice and recommendation of our very competent Board of Bishops, and that we hold ourselves in immediate readiness to choose our arbiters and submit our case to the said Court of Arbitration, the day that our brethren, the plaintiffs, will withdraw their suit from the Court of Common Pleas, and give us notice

that they are ready to accept and follow the advice of the Board of Bishops."

Revs Lowery, Weidler, *et al.*, declined to arbitrate because we had before refused a hidebound arbitration and they continued their case in the courts. This they did at great cost to the laity of the conference and with heavy loss to the connectional interests of the church. Besides losing the \$400 we were in the habit of giving each year, to the conference collections, they gave to Rev. Weidler \$400 of church extension and missionary money and to their attorney and court expenses \$420, making in all \$820 for the first year, while the special session of conference cost them and us not less than \$600. And because of their cruel treatment of us and expenses they have forced upon us, we cannot respond this year to the calls for the general work and the conference will be short at least \$400 that we could and would have given if they had given us Dr. Rock and permitted us to live in peace. This is, for the two years, worse than the loss of \$2,220, in round numbers, and this would have made Boehm church, Reading, a splendid success or it would have much more than paid the debt on Pleasant Hill church. And this waste and destruction of one of our best churches goes on, while the church erection secretary goes up and down the land telling our people that we have 1,200 societies without churches and begging our people to give to the church extension fund, to build churches for these homeless congregations.

Bishop Hott and D. D. Lowery will doubtless apologize, as heretofore, for breaking positive and tacit promises and refusing to appoint Dr. Rock to Trinity church, by referring the people to the resolution adopted by that conference. That resolution was not in the way. It was only a request to employ members of the conference "as far as practicable." There was no command in it. Besides that two fields were left open, and to one of these the presiding elder appointed, almost immediately, a member of another conference. Had the presiding elder

promised that good brother employment before the conference convened, and was that charge left unsupplied by the stationing committee so that it would not appear that they had done for him, in spite of the conference resolution, what they refused to do for Dr. Rock ?

Moreover certain members of the conference have made a great deal of noise about preachers coming in from other conferences and about Dr. Rock coming east. Is this a new thing under the sun ? Are not calls, transfers and change of conference relations a very old and a very common thing ? The most of the men who have made all this ado came into this from other conferences. And on how many churches, parsonages and congregations can these noisy fellows lay their hand and truthfully say, "I built and gathered these ?" Only one year before the conference refused us our choice, Memorial church, Harrisburg, had asked for Dr. J. P. Miller, whom they had already called, from Toledo, Iowa, and he was sent, although he did not present his transfer until a year later. And from that very conference Rev. H. B. Spayd went out and became pastor of First church, York. He was called more than seven months before and Bishop Kephart and the rest of the stationing committee of Pennsylvania Conference, appointed him to said church seven months before his year had expired, without securing his consent to resign and go there. He did not resign his charge at Annville, but stayed the entire year. The congregation at York waited for him from March until October, and when he went, East Pennsylvania Conference uttered no word against calls or his going. They said nothing then about the itinerant system being imperilled. But going out is a very different thing from coming in. See ? It has been more than insinuated that Dr. Rock was a place seeker, seeking the best places. So far from this, the best places have sought him, and he authorizes us to challenge any man to stand up and name the church he ever connived to secure. Only last fall he was offered the best station and the best circuit in a con-

ference not far west of Pittsburg and the best-paying station in another conference on this side the Mississippi. Is this his crime or is it one of the good reasons why we wanted him ?

If one takes the politician's view and is ambitious to be a delegate to general conference, presiding elder, bishop, or hold some other general office in the church, the wisdom of changing conferences might be questioned. But if he prefers to be a pastor and regards a good pastorate preferable to official feathers, what harm can there be to him or the church to change conferences ? What claims has a preacher on conference ground that he does not have on church ground ? And is it not the success of the denomination we seek ? And if we specially seek conference success, will not the coming in of the stronger men more certainly insure it ? College takes from college, and often with good effect all around, and will not calls and the encouragement of them be a spur to ministers and congregations to merit the best ? No, it is jealousy and envy that sees evil in calls and conference changes, and the envious clergyman is a nuisance and a self-confessed weakling. Calls are often wise and they are essential to the continuance of the itinerant system, to the prosperity of the church and to the raising and preserving of a high standard in the ministry. When conferences and men cannot force mediocrity of mind and dearth of spirituality and piety upon intelligent and religious congregations, then preachers will seek to merit the best appointments.

AN APPEAL.

We have finished a condensed history of our controversy with East Penna. Conference. Our appeal is to the laity and to the large number of the clergy who believe in fair play and equal rights.

Dear Brethren, did we violate any custom in asking for a man that would suit us ? Were we not encouraged to our course ? Do petitions to an annual conference,

through a delegate or otherwise, mean anything or is this only a sop thrown out to vex us when we take it in earnest? Is this the true spirit of our polity? Is ours a reign of clerical "lords over God's heritage," or is it a "government of the people, by the people and for the people?" Is not ours a case of taxation without representation? Would you furnish all the money and permit the presiding elder and a pastor to do all the "bossing?" Has it not been the custom of our conferences to get preachers and congregations together that will be pleased with each other? Is not this wise diplomacy? Is it not the most unwise and unseemly thing in the world to send a preacher where almost an entire congregation do not want him and will not support him? Is there sense or statesmanship in it? Is it not success the conference seeks and is not failure inevitable when the relations are unpleasant? If a congregation asks for a competent man and he is willing to serve them, would it not be wise to solemnize the nuptials and let them work together? Is not love the best reason for matrimony? Would it have done the conference or its members any harm to have given us our choice? Would not the harm that has been done been avoided? Would not more than \$2,200 of money have been saved to the church besides much good feeling? The most efficient men will always be wanted at the churches paying commanding salaries, and will not salaries depreciate if their wishes are denied? Do not preachers only close the doors of the best churches open to them by neglecting their own mental and spiritual furnishing? Will not preachers much sooner reach the best places by making themselves worthy than by opposing the strongest churches in their choice of the strongest men? We believe congregations should seek such men through courteous requests to the conference, but the most efficient men will always be sought after by the strongest churches and no amount of persecution and fuss by envious souls and by mediocrity will prevent them from getting together. If it does, then the doom

of the church is written. Intelligence and wealth will not seek membership in a church where their choices, tastes and rights are ignored and where the largest privilege they will have, in managing the church, will be in furnishing the money. The commercial idea runs all through the New Testament and the kingdom of Jesus and no amount of envy or self-seeking on the part of small men will prevent the Master from promoting the faithful and successful to more honorable, responsible and remunerative places

Have our circuits, stations and districts no rights the conference and presiding elders must respect? Is it actually true that the laity have no knowledge of what they need and no immediate voice in securing it? Since this controversy began bishops and ex-bishops and an editor have put forth the doctrine that, "under our itinerant system, preachers waive their right to choose their appointment and churches waive their right to choose their pastor." This is misleading. Everybody knows that our preachers do not only say, in conference, "If the conference can give me such and such a field and convenient to my home, I will take work from the conference, otherwise I will not," but preachers have the right of appeal from the report of the stationing committee, the right to refuse to go, and the right to resign and refuse to stay, for any reason satisfactory to themselves, and we never knew a preacher to lose his conference standing or to be punished for either. Preachers in the strength of their manhood and, who have something to say now about the "vows" they took, have done this and worse. They have abandoned the ministry for purely secular pursuits and the larger salaries they afford. He can also hold his conference appointment and draw his salary while looking about for something more satisfactory in another church and, when he has found it, he can resign and go to work in another church and when his conference convenes he can secure a letter of honorable dismissal from his conference and church. So far from being punished for it

we never heard of one, out of the many, that was even censured by his conference. Where does it say in the discipline that the churches waive their rights to choose a pastor? What is the meaning of lay delegation in the annual conference and of the right of petition? In a very able paper read by Bishop J. S. Mills, D. D., before the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair, and in a good paper from the pen of Bishop E. B. Kephart, D. D., and both published in the United Brethren Quarterly Review, they both say, in speaking of the American quality of our polity, "The right of appeal is inviolate," and we believe what they say. The latter says the same thing in his Manual on the Discipline. But some would have us believe that this right, in all things, is for the preachers only. Is that true? If so, is it American or Christian? We do not believe the right of appeal is inviolate for preachers only, but for all. If it is for preachers only, then the discipline should say so. But East Pennsylvania Conference and the presiding elder must hold that the laity have no rights they must respect, for they ignored our petitions, they treated our pleadings with contempt, they dealt with us with severe arbitrariness, appealed to the arm of the law to compel acquiescence, and, as if gone mad with the spirit of Romanism and the Inquisition and St. Bartholemew's Day, they annuled our contract with Dr. Rock, without even a complaint against him, deposed all our officials from office and expelled every member of our large congregation from the church, without previous notice of charges or complaints and without the hearing guaranteed to us by our book of discipline, and this they did also in violation of the American spirit and practice. We appeal to the reader whether we have not been treated without feeling or statesmanship or any sign of the christian spirit, but with arbitrary rule and cold and unyielding law, from the beginning to the present status of the controversy; and whether this publication of the facts had not become a necessity to the church and the cause of our Lord.

We are told that the exclusive control of the pulpits must remain vested in the stationing committee to save and perpetuate the itinerant system. So far from this, others have the itinerant system who have neither presiding elders or bishops and whose laity always choose their pastor. He is appointed, but with careful deference to their wishes. Then who does not know that, in our own church, preachers are selected and often practically stationed before the conference convenes. Congregations and preachers make choices of men and fields, and presiding elders and bishops make promises to both and fulfill them, because it is wise to do so or because there would be trouble if they did not. The truth is that the rights of the preachers must not be lessened and the rights of the laity must be as many as those of the clergy, the preachers tastes and circumstances must be consulted, and the churches must have a distinct voice and right of choice in the selection of pastors, or the itinerant system will come into utter disrepute and every other interest of the church will suffer for want of accessions and financial support. It is the only thing that will save the itinerant system. There is no place for arbitrary rule in the church of Jesus Christ. It is not the spirit of Christianity. The Methodist church makes a habit of transferring preachers from conference to conference, from New York to San Francisco, and from Boston to Denver to please the laity upon whom the great financial burdens of the church rest. This they do because the success of Methodism and Christianity require it. This they do, too, with no fear that it will tear down conferences or deteriorate the ministry.

In less than six months after the conference refused us Dr. Rock, sent us Rev. Weidler, and, while he, supported by Rev. D. D. Lowery, and others, was seeking possession of our pulpit through the courts, a Methodist bishop made eleven changes in Philadelphia conference to accommodate the tastes and necessities of one congregation. And yet we hear much of our

"most excellent" and "flexible polity," of none or almost none of episcopacy in it, and of as much of the Christian and more of the American spirit as in that of the M. E. church. Where are our "flexible polity" and "flexible usages" if the last two appointments of East Pennsylvania Conference to Trinity church are in harmony with it? Its flexibility must lie in the liberty of doing such lawless things as we have named in the chapter under "Things Unlawful."

What we have written, we have written, and no reply from any source whatsoever, shall be sufficient to provoke us to write another line. From necessity and the solicitations of many lay and clerical friends, and that the church might know the facts in the case, the official board unanimously approves and sends forth this pamphlet. This we resolved to do in official meeting assembled and without encouragement from Mr. Rigor or Dr. Rock. Furthermore we are ready, if necessary, to establish the truth of the facts herein contained with such evidence as will be accepted by any court in the land. We are not without hope for the future. Although many of our churches have chosen their pastors and sometimes called them from other conferences, the like of our trouble has probably never occurred in the history of our church. With a bishop and presiding elder with more judgment to discern the situation, and with less rashness, this would not have occurred. And thank God, it will not likely occur again in fifty years, if ever. The men are scarcely born and, Heaven grant they never shall be, who will venture to repeat the unseemly and atrocious thing.

By order of the Official Board of Trinity
U. B. Church, Lebanon, Pa.

July 29, 1896.





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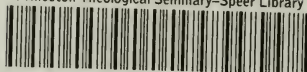
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